been modified by the Emperors of the Han. With it inevitably went much of that elaborate bureaucracy and of those political theories which were among the greatest achievements of the Chinese. Disorders could scarcely be avoided. It is still an unanswered question whether the Chinese can construct a type of government which will meet the new conditions as successfully as did the old—whether China, having lost the political structure which through the centuries brought it unity, will be able to preserve that unity by other means.

At first sight, the abandonment of the monarchy and the attempt to transform China into a republic seemed the height of folly. With almost no preparation, the Chinese were scrapping political institutions with whose operation they were familiar and were adopting from the West a form of government with which they were quite inexperienced. On second thought, however, it is clear that this offered some, perhaps the best, hope of avoiding prolonged civil war and possible foreign intervention. The Ch'ing dynasty could, at best, have been kept alive but little longer. Yuan Shih-k'ai, the most powerful military figure in the country, and hence possessed of the best chance of founding a new dynasty, would probably not have been peacefully accepted as Emperor by the nation and certainly not by the revolutionists. There was a bare possibility that under the name of a republic the nation might work out in an orderly fashion the political institutions required by the new day.

At first it looked as though this hope might be realized. Gradually, however, the machinery inherited from the old regime disintegrated. The new was slow in being constructed. Within a decade and a half only the barest shadow of a

national govern-
ment remained and the country wab racked by fighting.

The administration of Yuan Shih-k'ai began fairly auspiciously.
Yuan controlled the strongest army, and outwardly had the sup-
port of the republicans and the former adherents of the Manchus.
He succeeded in keeping the capital at Peking, near the center
of his strength. The foreign powers accepted him.

Almost immediately, however, Yiian's troubles began. The
provisional constitution which the body at Nanking adopted in
March, 1912, and to which he was supposed to conform, placed
the President under the control of Parliament and gave him lit-